

• A •
STUDY
• IN •
BLACK
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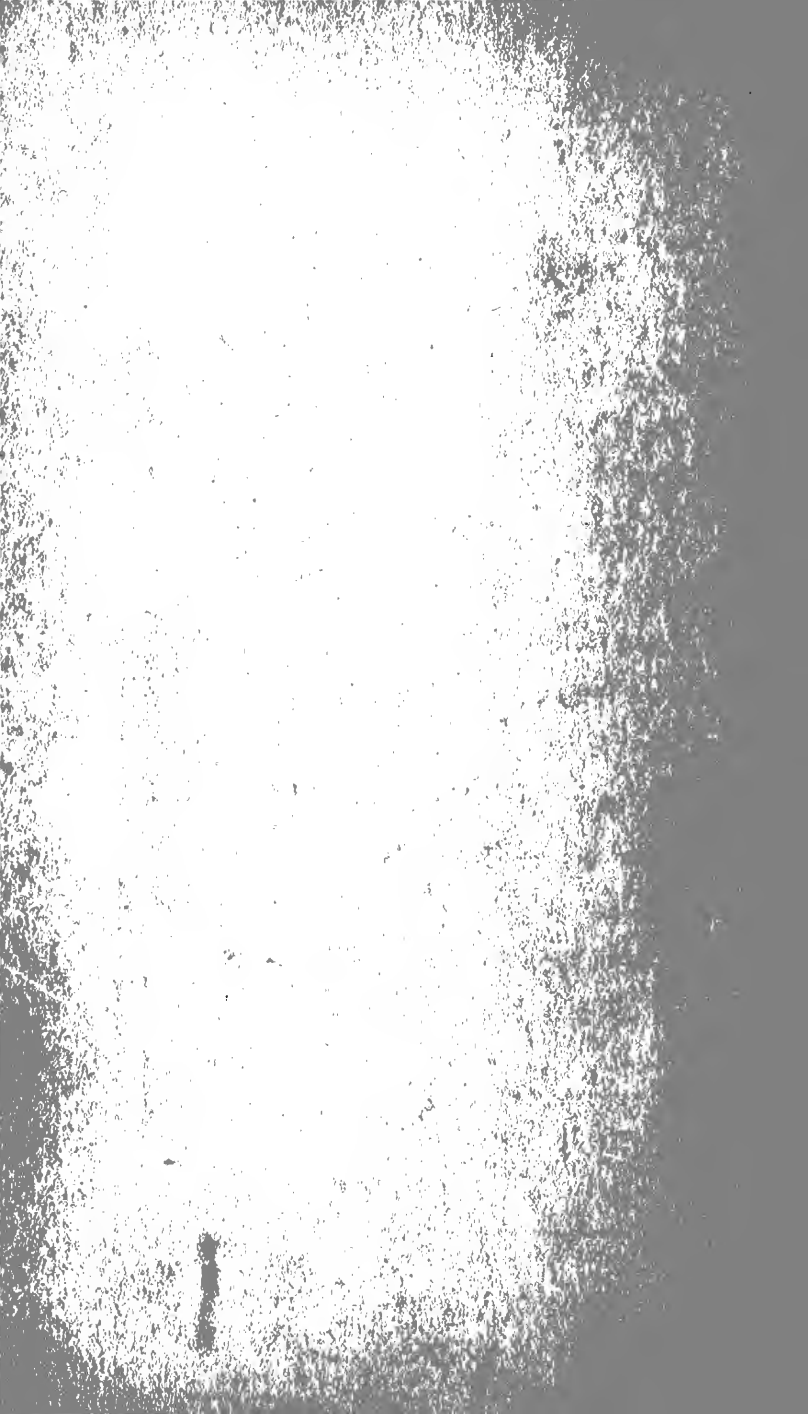
EVA



A STUDY
IN
BLACK & WHITE



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FOREWORD

THIS little story is written in appreciation of two people whose lives are the exemplification of a great and unfaltering love. On the part of the one in Black it is characterized by an overwhelming affection and an unselfish devotion whose supreme joy it is to serve the beloved. On the part of the one in White, by a rare understanding of the higher values of human character and true friendship and an utter indifference to those superficial distinctions which too often deprive us of the sweetest and holiest fellowships.

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THE AUTHOR

• A STUDY IN • BLACK & WHITE

IT was a gray morning in an old Virginia town. There was a chill in the air that foretokened the end of balmy October weather and the coming of November days when in the early dawn the earth would be blanketed with a white frost and the bare-footed pickaninnies of the negro quarter would perform artistic dances on the bare ground—not to give expression to the music in their souls, but to keep their black feet warm.

In a cheerless cabin, a slip of a girl not more than eighteen was building a little fire on the hearth with a few sticks which she had made out of a wooden box begged from the grocer around the corner. In the center of her round black face were two large luminous eyes which had in them a troubled look. There were marks of care and the suggestion of one who was much older in experience than in years. She was not building the fire to keep her own body

warm. On the bed in the one room which served for kitchen, dining-room, parlor and bedroom, were two brown babies—a girl of two and a boy of four. They would be cold when they began to play on the wind-swept floor. The chill air was coming up from beneath, and through the ill-fitting door.

Her heart was troubled, for she could not beg boxes enough or gather sufficient wood to keep the fire burning through the coming winter days. She was finding it hard to earn the money to buy food and pay the rent of her makeshift home. Although but an illiterate and poor negro girl, her soul was on fire with one resolve—she must care for her babies. They must have food and shelter and clothing. They were hers. In a sense they had been thrust upon her, for when she was but a child she was urged by an unsympathetic mother to marry a man much older than herself, who after a few years died, leaving her destitute.

She had never known a mother's love. Her mother was cruelly exacting and not unwilling to traffic in the happiness of her own child. All that she had missed in her

childhood and longed for—a mother's tender love—she poured out upon these two little children. As she stooped before the flickering blaze, fanning it with her well-worn skirt, a vision of better things burst upon her. She had heard some of her neighbors talk of a great city many miles away where fabulous wages were paid, and where, if once she could reach it, she might give her babies plenty of food and good clothes. As she thought and the fire began to burn, a picture of that city appeared among the flames. It was a city of beautiful homes and wide streets, great stores, crowds of people and everyone with work and plenty. Her big eyes grew larger as she thought of it. The resolve was made. She would go with her precious babies to this city of her dreams.

She decided not to tell anyone of her resolve. They might discourage her. Neither would she put off her going—she might lose courage. So she went to an old negro who bought and sold all sorts of junk and asked him what he would give her for her small belongings. Everything was sold for a few dollars, and within forty-eight hours she

was at the station with her two babies waiting for the train to carry her northward.

The journey seemed very long. The little boy and girl were in a new world and were restless and wild with excitement. When after an hour or two the train crossed a long bridge over a wide river, the young mother felt her heart sink within her, for it seemed to her that she was leaving everything that was familiar and homelike. She was going into a far country where she might encounter many dangers and her darlings might starve among strangers. But courage came again, as she remembered for whose sake she had gone out into this unknown world. From her childhood she had believed that she was one of God's "little chillun," so she turned her thoughts towards the great Father and prayed half audibly, "O, dear Jesus, I need You very much jes' now. I don't know what's goin' to happen to me, but I believe You will keer fer me and my babies." After that there was peace in her heart.

The train had been rushing on and had entered a tunnel. The lights had not been

turned on in the railway car, for those were the days of kerosene lamps. In a few minutes all was dark. The children huddled close to their mammy. She sat very still repeating, "I know You will keer fer me. I know You will keer fer me." When the train came out of the tunnel into the sunlight she said, "That dark hole was jes' like death. Very, very dark when you go in, but how beautiful when you come out on the other side." They were now entering the city. Many houses were appearing. As she looked from the car window she saw long streets, great high buildings and many huge churches with higher steeples than she had ever seen. The train came to a full stop under a long covered station shed. The conductor put his head into the car where she sat and shouted, "Baltimore!" She had reached her destination.

She gathered her children and her meagre belongings together and made her way out of the car. As she stood upon the platform fear came upon her again. Within the four walls of the passenger coach she had begun to feel at home and somewhat secure, but now she must face the outside world. There

came to her mind a word she had been taught as a child. She could not read, so she repeated from memory, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. . . . I will fear no evil." She repeated the words over and over. As she found herself in a hurrying, surging crowd she was bewildered, but no longer afraid. She clutched her baggage, and her babies held on to her skirts. After watching the moving and disappearing people for a moment, her eyes rested upon an old negro with a long whip in his hand. He had a kind face crowned with snow-white hair. Venturing towards him, she told him her simple story. She had come to Baltimore to look for work—if she could only find a place to stay a few days she believed she could get a job. He did not pay much attention to her; his eyes were fastened on the two little children standing by her side who with wondering eyes were looking up into his. They had won his heart and he responded to her inquiry with a cheery smile, "I 'spec me and my old woman could keep you and dese chillun fer a few days. I drives a hack, and I don't seem to have no passengers. 'Spose I drives

you all up home and see about it.” The stranger in a strange land felt that her prayer was answered. She was being guided and cared for. She thanked her benefactor many times and her heart overflowed with gratitude as the ancient hack and the more ancient horse moved over the cobblestones toward the little shack which Mose called his home. To her the skies were very sunny, although to the average Baltimorean they were overcast with clouds. At the door of the dilapidated abode stood an old woman waiting for her “ole man.” It was now supper time, and on the stove in the back room the pork chops, corn bread and black coffee were ready. When she saw the young girl and the two little children, she thought they were passengers Mose had picked up and had stopped to tell her he would be back for supper as soon as he had taken them to their destination. She came out to the hack and when she saw the two fascinating babies her face lighted up and she gathered one of them to her bosom and said, “Honey, you is sure a sweet chile.” While she held close the protesting little girl, her husband explained that he had

brought the mother and children to stay with them until work could be found. Perhaps the big, generous heart of this old colored woman would have prompted her to take the stranger in if there had been no babies with her, but be that true or not, that little child in her arms opened wide the door to her heart and home. "Sure," she said, "you all are welcome," and began to pull out the bundles and usher the little group into the house. Turning to the mother she asked, "What is your name, chile?" "Lucy," she replied — "and this here angel girl?" — "Hannah" was the answer. "And this little boy?" "Robert," she said. And so Lucy and Hannah and Robert became members of that household and shared with this old couple everything they had.

Perhaps that benign power which directs our destiny, and is not unmindful of a sparrow's dying hour, had a hand in leading Lucy to that old negro on the station platform. A strange fatality had befallen this old couple. They had been bereft of six little children, dying one after another before they were three years old, and were

now childless. Hearts which had been empty for years overflowed, so that they gave with joy to these children, even when they were hungry themselves. Strange as it may seem, to them a full heart was more satisfying than a full stomach.

Lucy set about hunting work at once, but it was not so easy after all. Three days passed and still she was without a job. Again doubts and fears assailed her. Perhaps it would have been better if she had remained in her Virginia home where she had friends and fought out her battle there. Mose and his wife, Amanda, encouraged her, and when the Sabbath morning came invited her to go with them to church. They were Methodists and she was a Baptist. Rather timidly and shamefacedly, she intimated her desire to go to a Baptist church. Pleasantly, they directed her to the colored Baptist church only a few blocks away and Amanda offered to care for the children. Lucy, however, took both of them with her. The church was filled with worshipers. Lucy found a place in the back of the room, a child on each side of her. She tried to keep both of them quiet

and contented, and at the same time join in the singing and listen to the minister. It was a difficult task, but somehow she managed it, and her soul was lifted up into the seventh heaven as she joined in the singing and listened to the pastor's impassioned exhortation to faith in God and faithfulness to Christ.

At the close of the service a half score of people flocked about her, attracted to those babies. They asked questions about them, apparently much more interested in them than in their mother. Through sheer timidity Lucy lingered until she found herself almost the last person in church. The sexton seeing her alone spoke to her and made friends of the children. He was so kind and so much interested that the young mother opened her heart to him and told him she was looking for work. He said he would remember her and asked her for her name and address. She went back to her benefactor's home with a song in her heart, strengthened and buoyed with hope.

In another section of the city in the home of the pastor of one of the prominent white Baptist churches, on that Sunday evening

the lady of the house discussed with her husband the need of a servant. Although a scholarly man, deeply interested in the intellectual phases of his work, the reverend doctor, after he had reached middle life, fell in love with a beautiful young woman of the far South who, while proud of him, was proudest of all of her lineage and an accomplished mother. Notwithstanding that it was at the close of a hard day and he was enjoying an hour of relaxation, so accustomed had he become to responding to her every suggestion that in a moment he was alert and at attention. His thought turned toward the sexton of his church and he said to her, "My darling, I will see Henry, our sexton, tomorrow morning and perhaps he may know of someone who would suit you." Now it so happened that the sexton of the colored church which Lucy had attended that morning had met the sexton of the big white church that afternoon at a rousing rally in another Baptist church. As they sat side by side and sang together with wild enthusiasm, "On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand," his mind wandered from the Elysian scene to

the little mother who had appealed to him a few hours before. He was irreverent enough to stop singing and whisper to his neighbor and comrade in the sextonial office, "Henry, ef you knows anybody what wants a nice girl for the house or kitchen I knows where I kin get one." When, therefore, on that Monday morning the minister spoke to his sexton about the needs of his household, the word dropped by his brother sexton came to mind, and he offered to bring the young woman to the parsonage. That did not quite satisfy the minister. He wanted to hasten the matter and bring comfort to the mind of the lady whose happiness was first in his life, and who so dominated his heart that a request was a command. He would see the sexton of the negro church, get the address of the young girl and talk with her himself.

It was long before noon when the dignified and gracious pastor entered the humble abode of the driver of the decaying one-horse shay. The aged Amanda met him at the door. The two brown babies were playing on the floor. He, too, was attracted to them. Stooping down he chuckled them

under the chin. When he told the old woman of his errand, her face beamed and opening the back door she called to Lucy, who was getting ready the family wash. The moment he saw her he was pleased with her. There was character in her face. The soul of a real woman shone through her big eyes. As he drew from her the simple story of her life he was deeply touched. When he told her of the way in which he had found her, she put her head in her apron and rocking her body to and fro, said, "It is de Lord"—"It is de Lord." She knew that it was the Lord who led her to the Baptist church that Sunday morning—the Lord who brought those two sextons together that Sunday afternoon—the Lord who led the fair lady to talk to her husband that Sunday evening of her desire for another servant. Perhaps it was the Lord who made that same fair lady discontented with the white servants who did not fit into her Southern ideas of what a servant should be. No philosophy of life, no scientific theory of the universe, no worldly wisdom, had ever polluted the pure stream of Lucy's childlike faith in a heavenly Father

who would not forsake his child. There were moments of anxiety. Now and then something disturbed her peace, but it was only a ripple upon the surface of her life. In the depths there was the eternal calm of an unbroken trust.

She promised the minister to be at his house that afternoon to see the madam, and if she suited her to begin service at once. It was not until he had gone that she realized that another great problem confronted her. What was she to do with her children? She had never discussed that matter with Amanda. When she spoke to her about it, the reply came, "Bless you chile, I'll take care of 'em fer you—they'll be no trouble at all." Perhaps it was the Lord who worked in the parsonage at luncheon that day. This minister was not given to worldly diplomacy in the conduct of his church, but experience had made him a diplomat of no mean ability in his home. His heart had gone out in tenderness to that colored girl and her little ones. He was not sure of the impression she would make upon the mistress of the household, so he skillfully and sympathetically told

her story, touching upon those phases which he felt sure would have their effect upon her who was to make the final decision. That afternoon Lucy came. It was arranged that sometime during each day she could see her babies. All was well. Her heart was filled with peace. Her earnest prayer had been answered.

The next morning while the new maid was about her work in the kitchen she felt something tugging at her skirt. Stooping down she looked into a pair of lustrous brown eyes which wistfully, questioningly, looked up into hers. A little girl of five was clinging to her, reminding her of her own Robert and his sister who held to her so closely as they stood in the station in the surging crowd not many days ago. She quickly wiped her hands upon her apron, caught the child in her arms and drew her closely to her. The little girl nestled her head upon her bosom and timidly whispered, "I like you, do you like me?" The black one drew the white one more closely to her and said convulsively, "I does honey—I loves you." As these two were folded in each other's embrace, the lady of the

house opened the kitchen door thinking she would see how the new servant was getting on and give her some instructions as to her work. She silently watched that scene for a moment, then quietly shut the door and withdrew. In a few minutes the older one released her embrace, and the little one whispered, "My name is Eva—what is your name?" "Lucy," she replied. So the introduction was complete. That hour a friendship and a mutual devotion began which has lasted for fifty years, and has not yet ended—a devotion which inspired this little "STUDY IN BLACK AND WHITE." It is a story of two lives interwoven by many experiences, sad and joyful, wrought through many days of sunshine and shadow.

In those early days Lucy was full of song. They were bright and happy negro melodies—sometimes a line of a grand old hymn. Her heart was gay and the sun shone brightly in her sky. Almost daily the minister had some friendly word with her about the deeper things of the spirit. Her mistress bestowed an occasional "well done" upon her, which more than paid for any criticism which the lady of the house re-

garded as necessary in the interest of discipline and good training. Her daily visits to her children, whom she joined in their play and left with much good advice, were occasions of joy to her. She turned toward home after a little talk with Aunt Mandy and an embrace from her children, with peace in her heart, although the work was not always easy, for she knew that soon she was to look into the depths of a pair of brown eyes, and feel the pressure of two little white arms about her neck, and the warmth of a fair cheek against her own black one. She loved her own children with great devotion, but her soul was filled with a passionate, unfathomable love for her little Eva, and that love was returned in such measure that her cup of happiness overflowed in laughter and song. To the little girl, Lucy's dusky face was as fair as that of any angel who sang around the throne, and her kisses were more to her than the savory tidbits which found their way into her little mouth during her frequent visits to the kitchen.

In that household was a son of twelve and a baby girl. Lucy was kind to them

and attentive to all their wants, but Eva was her adorable child. Upon her, her thoughts centered. In her she moved and lived and had her being. Her heart might have broken and deep shadows come again into her life when her little Hannah sickened and died a few months after she came to Baltimore, if she could not have taken refuge in the love of her own little "Plunkett," as she learned to call Eva. She nursed her baby with tenderness, offering fervent prayer to God to spare her life if it was good for her. She suffered poignantly when she died, but peace and comfort came into her heart when her "Plunkett's" arms were thrown about her, and her childish voice whispered, "Lucy, darling, I am so sorry Hannah died. I am your own little girl now. I love you awful much." So the tie that bound them was strengthened by this first mutual sorrow. Eva's heart was very tender and Lucy's sorrow had become her own.

Soon school days came, and with her hand in Lucy's Eva was taken to a neighborhood school for little girls. When she was turned over to the teacher, Lucy ex-

horted her to be a good little girl and mind her teacher. To the teacher she said, "She is a mighty sweet chile." When the little girl found herself in this new world of learning, and with joy discovered that she could read even big words, it was to Lucy that she ran with the information that she knew what "s-c-h-o-l-a-r" spelt. "Go away chile," was her rejoinder, "you know I 'cain't read nothin'." Climbing on a chair she threw her arms around her black mammy's neck and said excitedly, "I will teach you like my teacher teaches me." With an extra squeeze, Lucy replied, "Honey, if I could read the Bible, that's all I'd ask of God." In many a spare moment these two sat with a Bible with large print open before them, spelling out the words together, until Lucy recognized many words she saw—"God," "Jesus," "Heaven," "Life," "Death," "Sin," "Righteousness," "Love," "Peace," "Faith." One sentence attracted her until every word of it was photographed upon her heart, "There shall be no night there." Through all her life that has been her favorite passage of scripture.

It would appear that this story often leads into the shadows, but that is the way of all life. One rainy day in the week impresses itself upon our consciousness more than the six days of sunshine. Before many years there came a Sunday night when the household was awakened with the frightened cry of the wife and mother that her husband was very ill. In a brief moment all was over. A noble soul had passed on. A life of great usefulness had ended. A loving and devoted people were stricken, and an adoring wife widowed, wondering children orphaned, a household left desolate. It was in such emergencies that Lucy showed her rare quality of womanhood. With calm dignity, and yet with a tender and understanding love, she ministered to the needs of those who composed the sorrowing household. To her bewildered Eva she was especially gentle—a ministering angel. “Honey, come here in your mammy’s arms. Your dear father’s gone home to heaven. Jesus wanted him to rest. He worked so hard to make everybody good and happy, he got tired and went to sleep on Jesus’ breast. He is singing with the

angels now." Thus the little girl's thought was lifted from the darkness of the grave to the light of the glory land where she knew her father lived and was happy. When a little later death came again into that household and took the baby girl, the springs of life and faith deepened in this serving woman, and the character of the hymns she sang most frequently changed, "Jesus, Lover of my Soul, let me to Thy bosom fly," became a favorite as she went about her morning chores.

Something else was manifesting itself in her. There was a growing sense of the dignity of her womanhood. She began to resent that kind of dictation or criticism which she accepted demurely in the earlier days. She was becoming mistress of her domain. Now and then she threatened to leave for other scenes, but in her heart she knew she could not go away. She would have endured every real and fancied indignity. She would have become a slave and suffered the taskmaster's lash to be near her Eva. Only death could separate them. Hers was a real love because it was a discriminating love. She watched this

growing idol of her heart, her manners, the development of her spirit, the subtle changes which were coming over her. She was quick to discern between those qualities which ought to be cultivated and those to be checked. When going to a children's party—"Honey, don't eat all your ice cream, leave a little for manners." Coming from the party—"Honey, did you leave some of your ice cream like Lucy told you?" When the day had been hard at school and she had not done quite so well as her fond and ambitious mother thought she ought to have done, it was to Lucy she went for comfort—"Never mind, chile, your mammy wants you to do better than any other girl in school. Just do your best—that's all anybody can do."

Oh, the secrets which those two hearts and heads held in those days. Some of them very profound and sacred. It was to Lucy that "Plunkett" revealed the fact that a boy she met at the home of a girl friend had whispered that he thought she was pretty, and earned the reply, "You sho' is, Honey—he'd be a fool if he didn't think so." It was to Lucy that she came

sobbing one day, throwing herself into her lap and wailing, "I want to die! I have told a big story! I told Billy Wilson that I hated him. I really like him." "Don't worry, chile, a girl jes' naturally can't help telling a boy the opposite of what she means, and the boys know it," was Lucy's comforting answer. It was to Lucy that she opened her heart about joining the church. They were poring over the Bible together when she looked up into her black mammy's eyes and said, "Lucy, I love Jesus and I want to join the church." The colored woman's response was, "God be praised, I wish your dear father was here so you could tell him." In those days, which seemed so long ago, the proud father was in the habit of taking her to church with him on Sunday morning and seating her in the front pew, from which she would look up into his face, wondering what it was all about, and yet she had imbibed his spirit and reverently accepted his Lord, and to this woman of spiritual understanding she came to unburden her heart. Her mother loved her devotedly and was sympathetic with her spiritual longings, but the child

felt freer with Lucy to talk out her heart because the colored woman appealed to her as being on her own level—one child to another.

Then came the days of budding womanhood. Eva was no longer a child. Lucy felt the change more than did the girl herself. The same intimate relation continued. Secrets were told as in other years, but a new dignity characterized her darling, and instinctively she felt she must call her "Miss Eva" now, and maintain something of the attitude of a servant. Eva felt this change in her Lucy, and while she had had deeply instilled in her the consciousness of race and class distinction, her Lucy could never be any other than her dearest friend and soul-mate. She might serve her with her hands. She might have a black face. She might not be her social equal from the world's viewpoint, but she wanted nothing she could not share with her. The black woman realized that her subtle fears were unfounded—Eva had grown to womanhood and no change had come in her attitude. She would always be her "Plunkett," and a deeper peace than she had ever known

came into her heart. She had one sure possession—the love of her idol.

It was about this time that another shadow fell across Lucy's life. Eva's mother, for a number of reasons, desired to go abroad with her daughter. She wished her to have the advantage of travel and the study of music and the languages. It might be a year, it would probably be more. It would be impossible to take Lucy. The thought of it made the young girl sick at heart. The world without Lucy would lose much of its charm. What otherwise would have filled her heart with delight, and been regarded by her as an unusual privilege greatly to be desired, was something to be dreaded. She confided her foreboding to the ever-sympathetic Lucy. Throwing her arms about her neck she whispered, "Lucy, it's all very fine to travel and see other countries and to study abroad. I do appreciate mother's thought of me, but I do not want to be separated from you. Oh, I can't bear the thought of it." Then again was revealed the manner of love which this one in black bore to the one in white. "My honey chile," replied she, "I've laid awake

at night thinkin' about it. My heart's almost broke, but, 'Plunkett' darling, I believe it's best for you. I think your mother's right. The best they can give you isn't good enough for you. Them big teachers 'll show you how to play the fiddle even better than you do now, and you'll learn all them languages and come back home Lucy's wonder chile. Honey, a few months ago I couldn't have let you go. It would've killed me. I'd been afraid I'd lose you forever. I would 've thought you'd come back a great fine lady and never keered for me any more. I've seen sence you've growed up that nothin' can change you. You'll always be Lucy's little girl." The separation came. They parted—these two—that is, parted in body. Two hearts were saddened at the thought of the months which lay between and the big ocean which would separate them.

Never a day passed without prayers going up from both hearts for the safety of the other. On one side, the young girl in the midst of new scenes and many thrilling experiences was missing one thing, longing for one thing, the opportunity to tell Lucy

about it. Perhaps, she thought, her black friend could not appreciate the pictures, or the new glimpses of life which came to her through her widening knowledge of French and German, but she would appreciate the landscapes, the quaint customs and costumes of the people, and her thoughts about it all. Once a young woman owned a dog whose fame went out into all the region round about because of his marvelous intelligence. He seemed to be able to understand her inmost thoughts. He was a more appreciative companion than many of her flapper girl friends. Dog fanciers studied him, but they found him to be a mongrel. Psychologists studied him, but they could not solve the mystery. His mistress said, "It is all very simple—we love each other, therefore we understand and appreciate each other." It is true that in those higher realms of human relationship it is love which deepens understanding and clarifies to one soul that which lies deep in another. By love we apprehend that which is not always clear to reason. By love great gaps between two intellects are filled up. Just to talk it all over with Lucy—that would

make the day complete. On the other side there was the loving, adoring negro woman about her daily task, picturing her beloved "Plunkett" in the fairy land across the sea, learning more, seeing more and becoming to her more beautiful every day. She kept her letters and had them read to her many times. She fed her soul upon them and put the pictures, which Eva had sent her of places and scenes, on the mantel in her room. Day by day she comforted her waiting heart with the thought that it was a day nearer the home-coming. At last that glad day came. The ship was due and she held in her hand the telegram saying her darling would arrive that afternoon. Everything else was forgotten. She ate no mid-day meal. She was at the station more than an hour before the train was due. With a palpitating heart she watched and waited. Finally a whistle was heard. Jumping up on the rail which separated the passenger platform from the train she peered out into the distance—the engine was in sight. Tears filled her eyes. Her limbs trembled. How could she endure the joy! The train had stopped, the gates had opened. Half blind

and dizzy, and almost unconscious, she found herself in the embrace of her beloved, and the crowd looked on wonderingly.

The little home was once more established with Lucy the mistress of the kitchen. Eva was now a young lady with something of a glamour about her because she had lived abroad and studied in foreign lands; but to her dear black mammy she was the same gentle, adoring and adorable child. There had been no moment in all her experience across the seas when she had been quite so happy as when with a full heart she put her cheek against Lucy's and whispered, "Honey, I love you." To Lucy the moment of supreme happiness had come, as her heaving bosom and moist eyes, deep chuckles and spasmodic clutching of Eva's hand showed. There were little gifts for numerous friends, but the one to which most thought had been given and which gave the most joy in the giving was the one for "mammy."

With her daily routine of life there came into Lucy's heart another cause for uneasiness. Frequently when she answered the ring of the door bell she confronted a

young man who asked for "Miss Eva." It was not always the same young man, but at each one of them when he made his first appearance she glared as if she would read the inmost secret of his heart, to make sure that he was worthy even to brush the shoes of her beloved. If one of them came quite often and seemed more attentive than the others she would study him more intently. She watched him as she waited upon the table—his voice, his manner, his words, his looks. She made a mental inventory of him and turned over in her mind his every quality, as she went about her daily tasks. No harm must come to her Eva. But Eva seemed to be untouched. She loved companionship. She enjoyed the attention of her young men friends—that was all. Lucy would have seen it if it had been more than that. Eva could not keep that secret from her black pal, even if she had tried.

One day in the early autumn after an absence of several weeks, "Plunkett" arrived from her summer outing at one of the Virginia Springs. After the first warm greeting and vigorous embrace she was

silent and a bit embarrassed, or so Lucy thought. She put her hand under her chin and asked: "Honey, what's the matter? Why don't you tell me all about what you've seen while you were gone? Did you fall in love with some young gentleman? You don't seem like yourself." Eva hesitated a moment, and then said: "No, Lucy—I don't think I fell in love with anyone, but I met someone whom I like very much, and he is going to call and I hope you will like him, too." Lucy's heart sank within her. She felt that it was the beginning of a new chapter in her life and the life of her darling. She was gentleness itself, however, as she talked to her about it, "I don't know nothin' about him, Honey, but I want you to be happy, and I'd kill anybody who wasn't good to you." "I'll do my best to like him." Eva told her what she knew about him. The recital of his good qualities was an enthusiastic one and betrayed a deeper interest than the young girl would admit to herself. On his first visit Lucy was disappointed. He was rather mature in years, and his voice was deep, and his manner abrupt. She was frightened. He could

pick her Eva up in one hand. She was so gentle in manner and slight in form. She made a study of him at the table and her mental comment was, "He's sure dead in love with her. He worships the ground she walks on." Before he left that evening, Eva took him into the kitchen to meet her Lucy. He was so genuine and friendly and understanding that from that moment she was his ally. The next day in talking it over she said to her "Plunkett": "I jes' tell you the truff, he's not like them young whipper-snappers who's been comin' round here. They look as ef a good wind 'd blow 'em over. He's strong, and kin take keer of you, and he's no child. He's a man who's had experience. You can trust his judgment." When the final decision was made, perhaps the thought that it was with the dear old mammy's approval that turned the scale in his favor. Undoubtedly, that fact added much to her happiness.

When the day of the wedding approached Lucy's soul was stirred with two emotions — she was unspeakably happy in the thought of her darling's happiness, but there were moments when an unbearable

pain shot through her heart as she wondered whether another would not come between them. She was too loyal and brave to even hint it, but the awful fear at times overwhelmed her.

The old order passed. The young bride was to leave the parental roof and establish a home of her own. On her wedding journey she confided to her husband that there was but one thing in all the world to make her happiness complete. If she could have her Lucy with her she would ask for nothing else. Some men might have been jealous of that devotion to a negro woman which made her companionship necessary to complete happiness, but he had an understanding heart, and suggested that she urge her mother to let her come to them. So it came to pass that after much persuasion the mother generously surrendered her claims and Eva went bounding to the kitchen to bring to Lucy the glad news. There were embraces and tears and kisses and a chuckle from Lucy with the comment, "Nothin' in this world, chile, man or woman, could keep me from comin' to you ef you really wanted me."

To some, life comes in cycles. We live over again the years which we thought were gone forever. We repeat the experiences of other days and feel again the emotions which stirred us to the depths in other years. The months had passed since the new home had been set up and the new way of life had opened. There were now four in that household. Another Eva—a precious baby girl had come. Oh, how Lucy prayed for mother and child! She had one child of her own—her Robert—who had now grown to manhood and was doing well, but the center of her world, the shrine of her heart, was where these two dwelt. The years had wrought no change, except to strengthen and deepen her love and devotion. When the child had reached five, in Lucy's mind she was "Plunkett" number two—her mother over again. She enjoyed studying their likenesses. Every endearing trait, every suggestion of beauty of character, "Honey, you is jes' like your mamma." Anything which she did not quite approve met with this rebuke, "You sure ain't like your mamma in dat." Now that this new interest and love had come into the older

Eva's life, surely the tie which bound her to the serving woman would loosen, and the heart's need of her be less, but not with these two—their love lived on and grew richer and sweeter through the passing years.

The scene shifts from Baltimore to New York. The exigencies of business made that change necessary. It was with deep regret that the young mistress bade good-bye to the scenes of her childhood and the friends of many years for untried experiences in a strange cosmopolitan city with life at fever heat, but loyalty to her husband and the fact that he would stand between her and a pushing, rushing, unmindful world made her willing and happy to go. There was something else which fortified her for the change — something which brought great peace when premonitions of loneliness and homesickness disturbed her—she would have Lucy with her. In those first years when she had made but few friends and her husband's business often took him away from home, she found her an unfailing comfort—her "heart's ease," as she often called her. Lucy was quick to

adjust herself to new surroundings. She soon learned the ways of the big city, and became deeply interested in a large church of her own people, presided over by an eloquent preacher who himself was an important factor in the life of his race. He noticed Lucy and introduced her to some of the women, so that in a few months she had taken her place as "a worker in the vineyard." She was appointed to membership on numerous committees and was elected secretary of the Order of "Galilean Fishermen." When this high honor came to her she had misgivings, for her penmanship and spelling were something akin to that of a modern college boy—the difference being that she was conscious of this deficiency and ashamed of it, while your modern collegian is blissfully indifferent. The honor was too great to decline. Timidly she undertook the task. It often taxed her resourcefulness to cover up her poor "scholarship" and keep the records so they could be deciphered. She was an adept at securing assistance. She knew where she could find "scholarship" and she went to the source. When some document must be

read instead of stumbling through it and betraying her unfamiliarity with the big words, she would say, "Will sister Mary Thompson read this, she has such a good voice?"

Lucy and Eva the Second were good pals. The little girl wanted to help her in everything. They lived over the days when her mother was a little girl. That mother had now another worshiper. Often came the request, "Lucy, tell me more about Mamma when she was young like I am." Many a story woven of fact and fancy which glorified the heroine of all of them was poured into the ears of the eager listener. If there were exaggerations and amplifications, to the enthusiastic teller they were all sober facts.

In the mind of the worshiper at the shrine of Eva it would have been sacrilege for her to have been compelled to do any menial work. To help about the kitchen was far beneath her. To soil her dainty hands with pots and kettles would have been degradation. Every attempt to learn any of the secrets of the charm of Lucy's cooking was discouraged. That was no fit

task for her. None of us knows the subtleties of his own inner motives. No doubt the black mistress of a domain pre-eminently her own was honest when she refused to permit her Eva to descend from her exalted pinnacle to soil her hands with vulgar pots and pans. It may have been, however, that lurking somewhere in her sub-consciousness was the thought that she would keep for herself the secret of that art which was making her famous. As time wore on, many friends came into her mistress' life, and Lucy became known to them first through the delicious meals which were served in that hospitable home. No chef at Delmonico's or Sherry's could surpass her in some of her creations, or in cooking the viands which made up the daily diet. She was famous for her biscuits, fried chicken, waffles and roasts of all sorts. After repasts which made them satisfied, contented and grateful, guests would insist on meeting the author of their happiness. Thus the pilgrimage to the kitchen at an appropriate hour became quite customary. Lucy knowing what was likely to take place, prepared herself and her throne room for the occa-

sion. They found her sitting by the table in the center of the room, her arms resting upon the immaculately clean red table cloth. There she received her guests in state. So deep an impression did she make upon those who thus became acquainted with her that after the lapse of thirty years, though separated by long stretches of time and distance, they remember her, write to her and about her. For fear she might be taken unawares she wore a large white apron and over that a gingham one, and when about her work another colored one so that the gingham one might not be too badly soiled. She had her own ideas about her art and stood by them with grim determination. No new-fangled notions for her. No strange cooking utensils, no weighing and measuring. Her cooking was done by intuition and experience. Frequently she would remark when asked to follow some formula in her cooking, "Miss Eva, I didn't come here yistiddy. If I had followed some of them receipts I would have lost my job long ago." As with her cooking, so it was with her religion—it was not a matter of reasoning or argument. She

knew God, but it was through intuition and experience. A picture stamped indelibly upon the memory of one who often saw her thus, was this trusting and trusted black woman sitting in her kitchen in an arm-chair on a Sunday afternoon, with a Bible with large print in her toil-worn hands, a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles on her nose—spectacles once owned by Eva's father—spelling out the words slowly, holding each one as a sacred treasure to be kept for all time. As she sat there with the sun lighting up her face it seemed as if the peace which passeth understanding filled her whole being and shed about her the light of another world.

Lucy had many of the superstitions of her race. To drop a dish rag, as she called it, meant that a woman was coming, or if her nose itched it would be a man who would appear at the back door. If her palm itched, money would be put in it. She was emotional in her religious life, but it did not consist in emotion. She was faithful in all of her relations. Although her devotion to both Evas was deep and absorbing, she never ceased in her faithfulness and her

sense of obligation to "ole missus." When she visited her daughter it was Lucy's delight to minister to her needs and prepare such food for her as out of the memory of other days she knew would please her. She had a keen sense of moral values. Her ideals concerning the relation of the sexes were high. She was a stickler for the observance of all of the proprieties. Her disgust with present-day tendencies and her contempt for the flappers of her own race were genuine. The younger generation received many severe lectures on their unbecoming conduct, and yet she was sympathetic with youth. She loved them and they loved her. Her judgment, or her intuition, was sound and her advice on many problems which arose in the daily course of life profitable. If Eva the elder wisely solved many problems which were forced upon her, Lucy for most part was the source of her wisdom.

Her little Eva, as we must call her, had grown into charming girlhood—the life and joy of the household—adored by her father, her mother's other self. It was an ideal household and life for all of them was full

of sunshine and song. But when the child was fifteen there came a change. For months the battle for her health was fought. Everything known to medical skill was tried. It is not well to open wounds afresh. The excruciating heart agony of those days for father and mother we must not dwell upon. Through it all, Lucy, whose heart, too, suffered, was comfort and strength. When the end came it was she whose understanding sympathy and unfaltering trust was like the under-girding of the everlasting arms to the grief-smitten mother. She rested her weary head on mammy's breast as in the days of her childhood. The touch of the calloused black hand against it in gentle pressure as she rocked her body to and fro and crooned a cradle song, ending with "The Lord will never leave you nor forsake you, neither will Lucy," gave her courage to gather up the threads of life and go on a little while longer.

For fifteen years after "Little Eva's" death, with the exception of absences during winter months spent in the South, or an occasional trip to Europe by Eva and her husband, Lucy and her blessed "Plunkett"

lived on in the same close fellowship, sharing with each other their troubles and their gladnesses. Then another great sorrow came. Eva's husband, after thirty years of devotion to her, failed in health. Again she took refuge in Lucy. Her heart torn between hopes and fears, she confided all to her faithful friend. When medical skill could do no more and she faced the fact that she must walk alone without him who had been her loved companion for many years, it was her old colored mammy who held her in her arms and mingled her tears with hers and spoke the word of comfort.

* * * *

One day with her home once more established and made happy in the companionship of one who had come into her life after the sun had passed the meridian, there came to Eva a shock. She saw signs of failing strength in Lucy. "Could it be that the day would come when she would no longer have her by her side?" They parted for the summer, Lucy going to be with her son, who now had a home and children of his own. There was uneasiness in the heart of the devoted "Plunkett" for fear that

Lucy did not have long to live. While she was in a distant city a telegram reached her that she was desperately ill and wanted very much to see her. Within an hour she was on her way to the bedside of her faithful companion and friend. After a night and part of a day on the train she found herself by her side. Every comfort had been provided. In a sunny room, lying on a bed immaculate in cleanliness, a trained nurse with her, was the dear old woman now not far from fourscore. Her eyes were lighted up with love and joy as she threw her enfeebled arms about her darling. Once more these two mingled kisses and tears. The moments and the hours passed—love knows nothing of time. Everyone felt that the end was near, Lucy had sent for her to say “goodbye.” It would be joy indeed to go from the glory of her Eva’s presence into the presence of her Lord. They talked in whispers of other days and of days to come. Heaven would hardly be heaven for these two, if they were not to be together through eternity. As Eva lay there by the side of her old black mammy and thought of what might be in store for both of them

on the other side, she felt in her heart that she would ask no higher place of Him who is the Master of our destiny, than to be a ministering spirit to this humble negro woman who had ministered to her so long and so faithfully.

Something happened during that visit. It is true that everything was done to keep Lucy here—to bring her back from the land afar which seemed so near. Was it the skill of the physician, faithful nursing, medicines in bottles and boxes? From that day Lucy began to get better, and while this story is written only a few weeks later she is still growing stronger. The old light is in her eyes and the old smile on her face and joyous laughter once more shakes her frame. It may not be long before the note of authority and command characterizes her voice. What caused the change? Was it not that power which breaks down all barriers of cast, or wealth, or learning, or social position and triumphs over death—THE POWER OF LOVE.



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